

storing in the memory arrangement product inventory information related to the inventory of the selling entity;

storing in the memory arrangement configuration information related to selling entity products offered for sale by the selling entity;

obtaining information regarding a customer's needs related to the selling entity products;

interactively selecting product options to define a configured product which satisfies the customer's needs using the stored configuration information to constrain selection of the product options; and

identifying from the inventory of the selling entity, using the stored inventory information, one or more available or buildable products which exactly or most closely correspond to the configured product.

2. (Once amended) A method as recited in claim 1, further comprising ranking the selected product options according to a value of the product options to the customer and, using the ranking to identify available and buildable products in inventory corresponding either exactly or most closely to the configured product.

3. (Once amended) A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the stored configuration information comprises a plurality of configuration rules which define relationships between two [of] or more product options.

8. (Once amended) A computer system implemented method for facilitating a sale of a product from an inventory of a selling entity, the computer system including a memory

arrangement and at least one processing unit coupled to the memory arrangement, the method comprising the steps of:

storing in the memory arrangement product inventory information related to the inventory of the selling entity;

storing in the memory arrangement configuration information related to selling entity products offered for sale by the selling entity;

obtaining information regarding a customer's needs related to the selling entity products; and

interactively selecting product options to define a sellable product which satisfies the customer's needs using the stored configuration rules and the stored product inventory information to constrain selection of the product options to product options available in either the available or buildable inventory of the selling entity.

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9. (Once amended) A computer system implemented method for facilitating a sale of a product from an inventory of a selling entity, the computer system including a memory arrangement and at least one processing unit coupled to the memory arrangement, the method comprising the steps of:

storing in the memory arrangement product inventory information related to the inventory of the selling entity;

storing in the memory arrangement configuration information related to selling entity products offered for sale by the selling entity;

obtaining information regarding a customer's needs related to the selling entity products;

presenting product options to a user of the computer system for selection by the user to define a configured product which satisfies the customer's needs using the stored configuration information to constrain selection of the product options; and

providing an indication to the user of the computer system, based on the stored inventory information, of whether selection of [the] a particular presented product option, if incorporated into the configured product, would preclude obtaining the product from the available or buildable inventory of the selling entity.

10. (Once amended) A computer system implemented method for facilitating a sale of a product from an inventory of a selling entity, the computer system including a memory arrangement and at least one processing unit coupled to the memory arrangement, the method comprising the steps of:

storing in the memory arrangement product inventory information related to the inventory of the selling entity;

storing in the memory arrangement configuration information related to selling entity products offered for sale by the selling entity;

obtaining information regarding a customer's intended uses of a product to be purchased;

assigning a corresponding value to each of the customer's uses depending on an importance of the use to the customer, and

identifying, using the stored inventory information and the obtained information regarding the customer's intended uses and corresponding value, one or more products which are in the buildable or available inventory of the selling entity and which exactly or most closely satisfy the customer's intended use of the product.